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SUBJECT: KEY AMBASSADORS IN KABUL DISCUSS REVIEW OF COMMAND  
STRUCTURE IN SOUTH WITH COMISAF

Classified By: Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs  
Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne

11. (C/Rel US, ISAF, NATO) Begin Summary. In a New Year's Day briefing by Generals McChrystal and Rodriguez for the embassies most active in the South and Southwest of Afghanistan ) Australia, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States ) the Generals outlined the conflicting military and political considerations in deliberations about how to effectively manage the large number of troops flowing into the South, including the option to split the regional command in two, either along provincial borders or some other configuration that makes sense militarily. Recognizing the political and economic linkages across the South and the fact that the insurgency recognizes Kandahar and Helmand as one area, General McChrystal said the large and slowing size of the coalition force in the South is driving the review of the current command structure. Additionally, the group discussed the need to better coordinate political approaches with malign actors, including restricting contracting. Ambassador Wayne noted that we need to better refine and coordinate a plan for limiting the role of malign actors in Helmand and Kandahar so that in parallel with our troop and civilian build-up we can act to help create a better model of Afghan governance in these key areas. End Summary.

Calculations for Splitting the Military Command in RC-South  
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12. (C/Rel US, ISAF, NATO) On New Year's Day, ISAF Commander General Stanley McChrystal and ISAF Joint Command (IJC) LTG David Rodriguez held a meeting to discuss the issues surrounding splitting Regional Command-South (RC-South) in two. Ambassadors from Australia, Italy and the Netherlands, the charges from the UK and Canada, and U.S. Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne attended. General McChrystal emphasized that while he is focused on the military options, he wants the decision to take political dimensions into account. He said his intention is to make a decision on how to proceed before the London conference on January 28, and to implement the decision between July and September when forces move into Kandahar, but he wants political input from key contributing countries before any decision.

13. (C/Rel US, ISAF, NATO) General McChrystal said RC-South is the biggest command in Afghanistan ) well beyond the size of a normal two-star headquarters, has a disproportionate number of significant incidents, and will be getting many more troops in the coming months. Likewise, he emphasized the many political and economic factors influencing the RC-South command decision, including: 1) a population concentrated on rivers, which link Helmand and Kandahar provinces; 2) the insurgency recognizes Kandahar and Helmand as one geographic entity; 3) the international boundary with Pakistan could be

complicated by a split as it currently aligns with RC-South and redeployment of troops could have a destabilizing impact on the current Afghanistan-Pakistan balance; and 4) the continuity of the economic corridor between Helmand and Kandahar, which impacts development and infrastructure activities. Additionally, LTG Rodriguez highlighted the increased number of Afghan troops heading into the region, and the heavy emphasis in the new strategy to partner with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP), which would lead to more than 150 friendly force locations. All of these create serious span of control issues should RC-South remain a single entity.

¶4. (C/Rel US, ISAF, NATO) General McChrystal said the cleanest military solution is to divide the command down the line between Helmand and Kandahar provinces, but that others may have a better solution. The key, he said, is that the solution needs to be militarily defensible. The Dutch Ambassador asked where Uruzgan would figure into this planning, also noting that there may be news on the future of Dutch troops following a January 8 meeting in The Hague. The UK Charge said the UK sees the logic of keeping Helmand and Kandahar together but understands the military logic of a split. In response to a question from the Italian Ambassador about changes to the geographic structure of RC-West, LTG Rodriguez said he did no, he does not anticipate such a change.

¶5. (C/Rel US, ISAF, NATO) The bridging organization for the period of transition would be the IJC, said LTG Rodriguez. Ambassador Wayne noted that whatever decision is ultimately made ) whether a split between Helmand and Kandahar, or some

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other configuration that takes into account the political issues -- will require regular and frequent interactions among the Regional Commands and the senior civilians if the stand-up of a new Command in the South is to work. General McChrystal agreed, noting the importance of determining and communicating clear accountability for each area of responsibility (AOR), which is not the case now. (Note: the current construct divides the battlespace among coalition partners within the provinces themselves. End Note)

#### Coordinating an Approach to Sideline Malign Actors

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¶6. (C/Rel US, ISAF, NATO) Discussion turned to development of a strategy to effectively minimize the influence of malign actors. General McChrystal said that the coalition needs to develop a coordinated strategy that identifies those actors we must influence or sideline to have effective results. Amb. Wayne said we need a plan targeted to address these actors that in Helmand and Kandahar so that we can act in parallel with troop and civilian build-up to show the Afghan people that the future can be different. To succeed, McChrystal said, there must be a concerted and coordinated strategy, he said, and a delicate approach to President Karzai. A coordinated decision-making process on how to deal with malign actors, which has been lacking up to now, will help ensure the success of the approach, said McChrystal. Addressing the systemic corruption that has plagued our contracting must be part of the approach, emphasized LTG Rodriguez. The UK Charge noted that even our friends are not pure. Rodriguez agreed, emphasizing the need to better monitor our contracting with our working partnerships and find ways to show we are serious about dealing with malign actors.

Comment  
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¶7. (C/Rel US, ISAF, NATO) While the decision to divide the RC-South Command is a military one, there are serious political implications for governance and development efforts in the South. ISAF outreach to key coalition ambassadors is

a welcome step in ensuring a collaborative approach to the final decision on how to proceed. Whatever the final decision is on how to split the command, a key challenge will be coordination and collaboration during the July-September timeframe, a time of peak operational activity across all civil-military lines of effort. Strong coordination and planning among the civ-mil leadership at the regional commands will be essential. Additionally, clear strategies and guidance on how we intend to sideline malign actors during this period of enhanced economic activity in the South will be an essential element of our efforts there. Embassy Kabul is working closely with our civilians in the South to develop these strategies and will ensure close collaboration with coalition partners to ensure a unified approach, particularly in Helmand and Kandahar.

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